

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00469 101018Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 HA-05 /090 W
-----053298 101029Z /15

O R 100949Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6919
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L C A P E T O W N 469

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AO, SF, WA, UN, PDEV
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: SOUTH AFRICAN-ANGOLAN TALKS ON BUFFER ZONE

1. DURING THE MEETING OF THE UK AND US AMBASSADORS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA ON MARCH 5 (CAPE TOWN 423), BOTHA REACTED TO OUR REFERENCE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN-ANGOLAN NEGOTIATIONS OVER A 50 KM. BUFFER ZONE BY DESCRIBING WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THOSE TALKS. HE SAID MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION HAD TURNED ON WHAT CONSTITUTED A "BASE". SINCE PRINCIPAL MILITARY CAMPS ALONG BORDER COINCIDE WITH SETTLEMENTS (E.G., RUACANA, OSHIKANGO, RUNDU, KATIMA MULIRO) WHICH COULD NOT BE DONE AWAY WITH, THEY TALKED ABOUT SCALING DOWN OF FORCES IN THESE CAMPS TO "PROTECTIVE"

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00469 101018Z

POINTS" WHICH WOULD NOT REPRESENT A THREAT TO THE OTHER SIDE. NETO AGREED TO THE SAG RETAINING SADF FORCES AT THESE POINTS PROVIDED THEIR NUMBERS WERE RESTRICTED AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT WAS REMOVED.

2. BOTHA SAID IN ACTUAL FACT WHAT NETO WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT IN THE BORDER AREA WAS MORE FAVORABLE TO THE SAG

THAN WHAT THE FIVE HAD PROPOSED. BOTHA STATED THAT AS AN EARNEST SIGN OF SAG GOOD FAITH THE SAG DID EVACUATE ONE OF THE "BASES". BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE BROKEN OFF WITHOUT EXPLANATION AT A TIME WHEN THEY APPEARED PROMISING. THE ONLY EXPLANATION THEY HAD FOR THE ABRUPT TERMINATION WAS THAT THE SOVIETS HAD GOTTEN WIND OF THE TALKS AND PUT A HALT TO THEM.

3. FOURIE IN OUR MEETING OF MARCH 8 (CAPE TOWN 456) WENT BACK TO THE SUNDAY CONVERSATION TO OBSERVE DURING OUR DISCUSSION OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF SADF FORCES THAT BOTHA HAD GONE INTO AS MUCH DETAIL ON WHAT NETO WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT IN THE HOPE THAT THIS WOULD FACILITATE ACCEPTANCE BY THE FIVE OF PLACING PLATOON-SIZE UNITS AT THE FORWARD CAMPS. WE GAVE HIM NO ENCOURAGEMENT ON THIS SCORE.

BOWDLER

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